



PROTECTION EDUCATION INSPIRATION



SHAPING *the* FUTURE



"It is a good big work I have in hand."

F. L. Olmsted Sr.

MESSAGE *from the* SUPERINTENDENT

Over the past 25 years

the National Park Service and its supporters have made major investments in the resources and programs of Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site. The Olmsted home, office, and grounds have been carefully restored, and we have had the pleasure of welcoming thousands of visitors and researchers to the site each year. The historic plans vault was also restored and refitted to store and preserve hundreds of thousands of landscape design records documenting the Olmsted legacy nationwide. In 2004, we celebrated the completion of a tremendous 15-year effort to catalog and conserve these records so that they will be available for scholarship and landscape restoration initiatives. Now it is time to take the critical steps necessary to ensure the protection of this investment and a bright future for our research and education programs.

Beginning in Fall, 2006

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site will undertake a major construction program to address serious and longstanding infrastructure and drainage issues. This comprehensive project includes the installing of fire protection throughout our buildings; improving the museum environment (heating/cooling/humidity) for visitors and collections; correcting site drainage problems; inserting structural reinforcements as needed; and repairing and rehabilitating the historic barn for public and education program use.

In order to prepare for and accommodate construction, we will need to be completely closed to visitors for the duration of the construction project; however, ranger and education staff will continue to offer a limited schedule of off-site programs. Museum collections not stored in our plans vault have been relocated to a temporary storage facility off-site. The Olmsted Archives is now available for use by researchers on a limited basis and by advance appointment with assistance from our museum staff. The period of construction, including the moving of staff and museum collections, is expected to last roughly 24 months. It is our plan to re-open Olmsted NHS in the Fall of 2008.

We hope you will be interested in the enclosed information explaining the project and our plans in more detail. Regular updates will also be posted on our website at www.nps.gov/frla. As always, we thank you for your continued support of Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

Myra F. Harrison, Superintendent



Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site
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PROTECTION



Our construction project planned for 2007-2008 will address serious and longstanding infrastructure and drainage issues at Olmsted National Historic Site.

What resources of Olmsted NHS will be better protected as a result of the construction project?

Frederick Law Olmsted NHS preserves the home, office, landscape design records, and residential grounds of America's foremost landscape architect and his firm. It was here that Olmsted established the world's first full-scale office for the practice of landscape architecture in 1883, and it was also the Olmsted family residence during the last 15 years of FLO's professional life. Primary resources include:

The **HOUSE**—a 2 1/2-story building with 25 rooms and a basement cellar. Constructed in 1810, it is believed to be the oldest building on the site and was extensively remodeled between 1883 and 1930 during the Olmsted family occupancy. The House was both a family residence and the location of Frederick Law Olmsted's principal office and sole workspace of the firm prior to construction of the office complex, which began in 1889.

The **OFFICE**—comprised of 22 rooms in four interconnected, 2-story structures: Clerical Department, Planting Department, North Drafting Wing, and Plans Vault. Constructed between 1889-1925, this was the primary working office of the Olmsted design firm for nearly a century. An estimated 1,000,000 original landscape design records are housed within the Office, as well as an adjunct facility at Springfield Armory National Historic Site. These records document over 5,000 projects nationwide proposed or undertaken by the Olmsted firm between 1860-1980.

The **BARN**—a 2 1/2-story structure located on the west side of the office complex. It consists of the original hay barn (pre-1883), carpentry shop (c.1884), and open storage shed (c.1910). The Barn was added to and extensively remodeled for office use by the Olmsteds and functioned variously after 1914 as a Modeling Room, Soil Testing Laboratory, Photographic Darkroom and Storage Area, etc.

The **GROUNDS**—a 1.76 acre residential landscape managed by Olmsted and his sons which serves as a "living exhibit" of Olmstedian design ideals and craftsmanship. An additional 5.35 acres of woodland was added to the Olmsted NHS boundary through congressional legislation in 1998.



MAJOR OBJECTIVES of the CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

FIRE PROTECTION

- Replace historic c.1925 sprinkler system in Office and Barn with new, code-compliant fire suppression system and add new fire suppression system in House for complete coverage of buildings
- Upgrade fire detection systems and emergency lighting throughout all buildings

MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL & SECURITY SYSTEMS

- Provide heating, cooling, and ventilation systems to all buildings and dehumidification in archives research areas where feasible
- Provide new site utilities (gas, electrical, communications, sanitary, etc.) to serve new and existing mechanical systems and other functions in all buildings
- Upgrade existing security systems in all buildings

DRAINAGE & WATERPROOFING SYSTEMS

- Upgrade inadequate site drainage systems to eliminate periodic flooding of buildings, grounds and archives research and storage areas

STRUCTURAL REINFORCEMENTS

- Provide structural upgrades for all first story rooms in Office with exception of the plans vault

BARN REHABILITATION

- Repair and rehabilitate historic Olmsted Barn to accommodate three-season use of the first floor for education programs and public meetings



MUSEUM SERVICES



Our construction project planned for 2007-2008 will significantly reduce the threat of collections loss as a result of fire, flooding, and climate changes.

What museum collections are managed by Olmsted NHS?

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site was established by Congress in 1979 to preserve and interpret the home and office of Olmsted, the great American landscape architect, and his firm. The congressional act also authorized the purchase of the Olmsted archival collection which is housed on-site.

The Olmsted Archives documents over 5,000 landscape design projects undertaken by the Olmsted firm from the 1860s to 1980. Included in the collection are plans for major metropolitan park systems, parks and parkways, our national and many state capitol grounds, school and college campuses, residential suburbs, arboretums, and private estates.

The Olmsted Archives contains an estimated 140,000 landscape architectural drawings and plans, 30,000 photographic negatives, 60,000 photographic prints, 70,000 planting lists, 12,000 lithographs, financial records, job correspondence, reports, and models. There are also study collections on urban design, landscape architecture, and the fine arts in general, and a reference collection of maps and atlases.

What are our museum services goals?

- Preserve and protect the archives and museum collections through museum quality storage, ongoing preservation maintenance, and preservation reformatting
- Provide public access to archives and museum collections through comprehensive collection descriptions and effective outreach to current and potential users
- Enhance educational programming and scholarship through dissemination of information contained in the archives and historic collections



MUSEUM IMPROVEMENTS *resulting from CONSTRUCTION*

FIRE PROTECTION

The House currently has NO fire suppression system, and the c.1925 sprinkler system in the Office and Barn does not meet modern standards. Fire could quickly overwhelm these connected structures, damaging or destroying them, along with the vast archival collections housed within.

Project will replace historic fire suppression system in Office and Barn with a new, code-compliant system. A fire suppression system will be added to the House for complete coverage. Fire detection systems and emergency lighting will be upgraded throughout.

HVAC SYSTEMS

An ancient, unreliable heating system and NO centralized cooling or humidity control endangers archival and museum collections stored throughout Olmsted NHS.

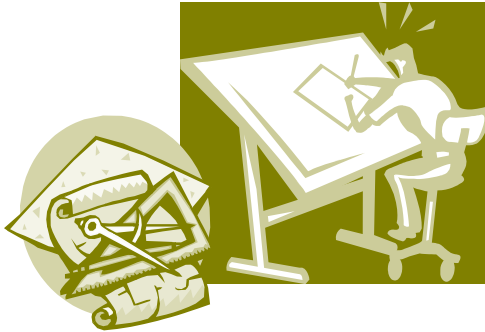
Project provides heating, cooling, and ventilation systems to all buildings and dehumidification in archives research areas where feasible.

DRAINAGE & WATERPROOFING SYSTEMS

Olmsted NHS is situated at the bottom of a granite drumlin with shallow soil, and the entire site is periodically flooded with storm water drainage from surrounding hills.

Project will upgrade inadequate site drainage systems to eliminate flooding of buildings, grounds, and archives storage areas.





What research opportunities and services will be available during construction in 2007-2008? What other resources should researchers be aware of?

services

Research opportunities

To protect the Olmsted archives and museum collections during construction, we have relocated many materials stored in the office wing at Olmsted NHS to a temporary location off-site. The drawings and plans collection will remain on-site and safely stored in our plans vault.

The Olmsted Archives is currently available on a limited basis for use by researchers with assistance from Museum Services staff. Limited research visits may be arranged by advance appointment. Requests for information will be answered in the order received, and it may be several days or longer before you receive a response. To expedite service, please include the following contact information:

- Name and Affiliation
- Mailing Address, E-Mail Address
- Scope and purpose of research
- Olmsted Job Number(s), if known
- Client name at the time of firm's activity
- City and State of Olmsted job

Once you have contacted us, we will gather materials related to the subject of interest and mail them to you. After you have reviewed all preliminary materials, you may request a research appointment. We encourage researchers to contact us as early as possible since an appointment may take several weeks to schedule:

OLMSTED ARCHIVES
 Frederick Law Olmsted NHS
 99 Warren Street
 Brookline, MA 02445
 Tel. (617)566-1689
 FRLA_Olmsted_Archives@nps.gov



Other services and resources

Museum staff will offer reprographic copies of original archival materials in our collection on a more limited basis during construction. It is necessary for us to retrieve materials for research and reprographic requests from multiple locations due to construction conditions. If you are interested in obtaining reprographic copies, please contact us for details regarding this service. Be advised that available formats are dependent on the size and condition of the original documents in the Olmsted Archives.

We strongly recommend that researchers consult other primary and secondary sources for information prior to requesting use of the Olmsted Archives. Resources such as the following often provide critical information for interpreting graphic material in the Olmsted Archives:

- The Olmsted Research Guide Online (ORGO) at www.rediscov.com/olmsted is an internet searchable database of information about existing records relating to Olmsted design work. Included is information about records held at Olmsted NHS and the Library of Congress, as well as a *Project Information* search for Olmsted design projects through a variety of access points such as client name, historic job number, project type, and city and state.
- Olmsted Papers and Records at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress at www.loc.gov/rr/mss or (202) 707-5387
- American Memory Project at the Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem>
- Papers of John Charles Olmsted (c.1860-1920) at the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard Graduate School of Design at www.gsd.harvard.edu/library or (617)496-1300

VISITOR SERVICES



Olmsted NHS will be closed to visitors during our construction project, but outreach and planning activities will continue in 2007-2008.



What is the goal of interpretation and visitor services at Olmsted NHS?

Park Rangers at Olmsted NHS offer visitors of all ages a variety of on-site and outreach programs including talks, tours, publications, audiovisuals, exhibits, and special events, as well as volunteer and partnership opportunities.

The goals of the Interpretation and Visitor Services Program at Olmsted NHS are to advance the study and understanding of Frederick Law Olmsted, his sons, the Olmsted firm, and their legacy; promote understanding of the creative process of landscape design and planning; encourage the study and stewardship of significant landscapes; and foster appreciation of the influence of landscape on people and communities.

VISITOR SERVICE ACTIVITIES *during CONSTRUCTION*

Our construction project planned for 2007-2008 will involve very disruptive work inside the historic buildings and on the grounds.

While it is not possible for Olmsted NHS to remain open to visitors during construction, we will continue to offer a limited schedule of public outreach programs as time and staffing allows. Important planning activities will also continue, as well as the development of interpretive media.

Please consult our website at www.nps.gov/frla for information about special tours and public programs or call (617)566-1689 and ask to speak with Visitor Services.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

- Guided walking tours of Boston's "emerald necklace" parks and other Olmsted-designed landscapes in the local area
- Community slide lectures which focus on the Olmsted legacy and biography
- Special theme lectures and panel discussions

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

- New visitor brochure featuring self-guided tour of newly-restored Olmsted landscape
- Upgraded portfolio books for visitor study featuring reproductions from Olmsted Archives
- Updated and expanded park website

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- Complete Comprehensive Interpretive and Education Plan
- Complete Historic Resource Study focusing on intellectual and physical environs of Olmsted House and Office
- Continue work on Historic Furnishings Report (HFR Vol. I: Historical Data is complete; seek funding for Vol. II Implementation Plan)
- Initiate planning and seek funding for new House and Office exhibits



EDUCATION



Our construction project planned for 2007-2008 will include rehabilitation of the historic Olmsted Barn for education programs and public meetings space !

What is the goal of education at Olmsted NHS?

The Education Program at Olmsted NHS provides students and teachers with hands-on activities and engaging investigations of the Olmsted firm design office, the restored residential landscape, and other Olmsted-designed landscapes in Boston and beyond.

The goal of education at Olmsted NHS is to help students understand and draw inspiration from the larger meanings, concepts, and stories associated with the work and legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted and his landscape architectural firm.

What school-based programs were offered by Olmsted NHS before construction?

Tracing the Brook Line: Frederick Law Olmsted and the Design of Riverway Park – a curriculum-based program for grades 8 and 11 involving a tour of the Olmsted design office and use of facsimile plans, drawings, and photographs to explore the steps involved in the design of Riverway Park in Boston and Brookline, MA

From Pencil to Park: Creating Imagined Spaces – a program designed to help students in grades 3-4 find out how the Olmsted firm turned ideas on paper into some of America's most loved parks and public spaces

Art in the Park – a program for parents and children using the restored landscape of Olmsted NHS as an inspirational setting for art-making

Junior Ranger – a program designed to help children ages 5-8 and 9-12 discover the resources and stories of Olmsted NHS and become better stewards of our natural environment and cultural heritage

Professional Development workshops for teachers on request, subject to availability

MAJOR ELEMENTS of BARN REHABILITATION

Repair and rehabilitation of the Olmsted Barn first floor will retain the existing c.1930s exterior, interior floor plan, and character-defining features of the historic structure to the degree possible.

Barn design will provide:

- Education program and public meeting space, particularly for formal school group activities and teacher workshops
- Permanent and temporary exhibit space
- Storage for: children's coats, backpacks, and lunches; and program and meeting equipment and materials (folding tables, chairs, AV and film projectors, etc.)
- New floor surface suitable for proposed activities
- Sink and countertop useable for cleaning and incidental food preparation
- Two accessible toilet facilities
- Upgraded fire suppression and detection systems
- Heating, ventilating, and cooling (HVAC) for three-season use





How will rehabilitation of the Olmsted Barn significantly improve our ability to provide and facilitate education programs at Olmsted NHS?

possibilities

Former conditions

Olmsted NHS formerly offered only limited educational programming utilizing the Olmsted house, office, and grounds. NO dedicated indoor space was available for student orientation, hands-on activities, or teacher workshops. This limited our ability to adequately manage school groups OR attract new student audiences with a richer, more varied schedule of program activities for different grades.

The current lack of space dedicated to education program use made it difficult to handle school groups of more than 30 persons indoors.

Education programs were weather dependent since no indoor space is available for student activities in cold or rainy weather.

Olmsted NHS has only one accessible restroom for public use, and it is located in a busy exhibit room of the Olmsted House open to all visitors. Student groups bringing bag lunches had nowhere in which to eat. There was NO dedicated storage for lunches, coats, backpacks, etc. These adverse conditions made it difficult to facilitate programs for students and teachers who could expect to be on-site 1-3 hours.

NO suitable meeting area is currently available for teachers or school administrators interested in using the resources of Olmsted NHS for curriculum or professional development.

New possibilities

Barn rehabilitation will make it possible for Olmsted NHS to offer an enriching schedule of hands-on programs and activities for students involving the study and appreciation of art, science, history, mathematics, social science, and language arts/biography. Programs will utilize new space in rehabilitated Barn Model Shop, as well as portions of the Olmsted Office and Grounds.

Barn rehabilitation will make it possible to accommodate up to 40 persons per group, or 1/3 more students than is currently possible.

Barn rehabilitation will provide an indoor program space suitable for three-season use (Spring – Fall).

Barn rehabilitation will include two new, accessible restrooms for education program and public meeting use. An outside alley on the west side of the barn will be dedicated to education programming and can be used by students with bag lunches. Barn design will include new coat, lunch, and backpack storage within easy access of education workshop space.

Barn rehabilitation will provide a dedicated meeting and workshop space for teachers and school administrators — a critical incentive in developing strong and lasting partnerships.